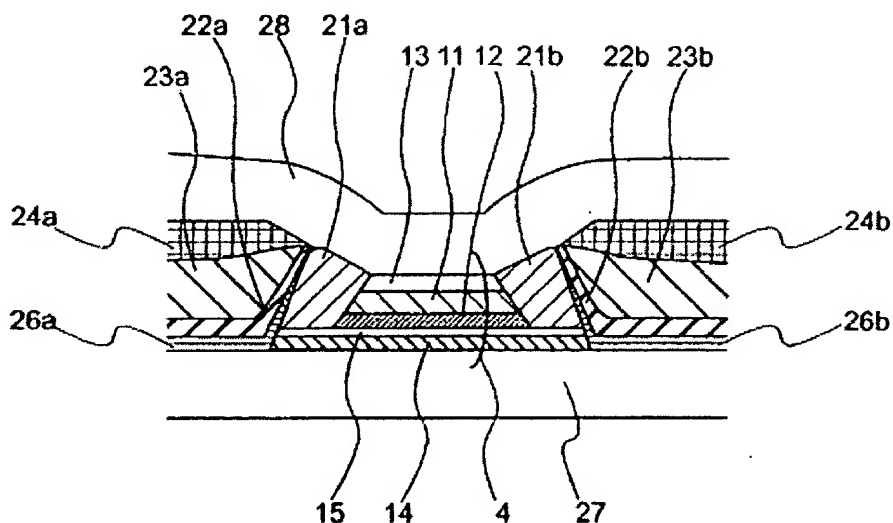


REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 and 4 are amended by this response. No claims are canceled or added. Accordingly, following entry of these amendments and remarks, claims 1-6 and 17-18 will remain pending.

As a threshold matter, claim 1 was objected to based upon the phrase "of between". Claim 1 is amended by this response to delete "of", thereby overcoming the objection.

Embodiments of the present invention relate to magnetic heads. As shown in FIG. 1 (reproduced below), one embodiment employs discrete first electrodes (21a, 21b) within second electrodes (24a, 24b). The respective first electrodes (21a, 21b) are separated from each other by an anti-ferromagnetic layer (11), a pinning layer (12), and a protection layer (13).



Accordingly, claim 1 has now been amended to more specifically recite that the first electrodes are separate from each other:

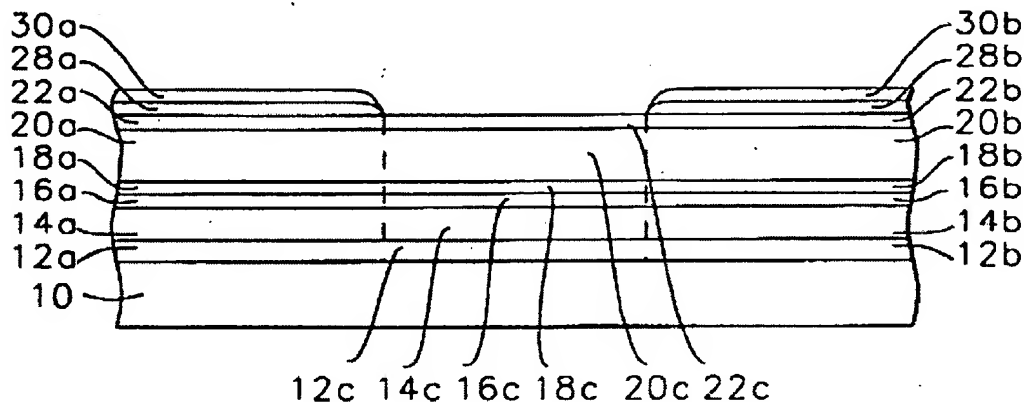
1. (Currently Amended) A composite magnetic head comprising:
... first electrode layers disposed respectively on the non-magnetic regions of the anti-ferromagnetic layer, the respective first electrode layers separated from each other (Emphasis added)

All pending claims stand rejected as obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,383,574 to Han et al. ("the Han patent"). These obviousness claim rejections are overcome as follows.

In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim elements. Here, the Han

patent fails to teach or even suggest first and second electrodes that are separated from each other in the manner claimed.

In the latest office action, the Examiner asserted that cap layers 22a and 22b of FIG. 4 (reproduced in part below) of the Han patent, corresponded to the claimed first electrode layers. (Office Action Mailed September 14, 2007, page 3, line 23)



However, this figure clearly shows cap layers 22a and 22b not as separate from each other, but rather as being contiguous through cap layer 22c. Based at least upon this difference between the pending claims and the Han Patent, it is respectfully asserted that this reference does not teach or suggest the claimed embodiments.

Moreover, the Han Patent specifically indicates that the cap layers 22a, 22b, and 22c may be formed from nominally inert and impervious conductor cap materials such as tantalum and tungsten (See col, 7 lines 39-49). Accordingly, in order to further distinguish the pending claims from the structure of FIG. 4, claim 4 has now been amended to delete Ta as a material making up the first electrodes.

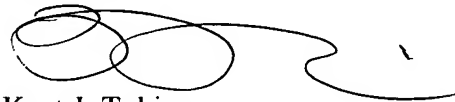
Finally, the Examiner could argue that the claimed first and second electrode layers correspond to the conductor lead layers 30a and 30b of the Han Patent. According to embodiments of the present invention, however, the first electrode layers are formed on non-magnetic regions. This allows the resistance of the electrode layer parts adjacent to the Read stack sensor, to much lower than in the head of the Han Patent. Accordingly, the claimed embodiments make the Read sensor more sensitive.

Based upon the failure of the Han patent to teach or suggest each of the elements of the pending claims, it is respectfully asserted that no conclusion of obviousness can reasonably be

drawn from this reference. Continued rejection of the pending claims is therefore improper, and the claim rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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